

Influence of Maternal Occupation on Adverse Pregnancy Outcomes

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ABSTRACT

Background: There is accumulating evidence that the type of work and environmental exposures in the work environment during pregnancy may have adverse effects on fetal development and pregnancy outcomes. A large variety of physical, psychological, chemical and social factors as well as different physical loads occurring in the workplace have been found to increase the risk of adverse pregnancy outcomes including pre-term delivery (PD), low birth weight (LBW) and still birth. The objective of the study was to determine the influence of maternal occupation on adverse pregnancy outcomes.

Methods: The study was a longitudinal study conducted at the Obstetrics and Gynecology department of a tertiary health facility in Nigeria. All the data were retrieved from the ante natal and delivery card of all the women that delivered at the unit within the time of data collection. Data was analyzed using SPSS version 25 and variables were presented as frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviation. Bivariate analysis was done using chi-square test. The level of significance was set at p value ≤ 0.05 .

Results: Most of the women were aged 21-30years 431(56.0%). Majority were married 746(96.9%), Igbos 763(99.1%) and Christians 766(99.5%). About a third of them were unemployed 241(31.3%) while among those employed, most were professionals 215(27.9%). Majority of both women 484(62.9%) and their husbands 550(71.4%) had tertiary education. Maternal occupation did not significantly affect the gestational age at delivery ($\chi^2=10.143$, $p=0.428$) and birth weight ($\chi^2=16.807$, $p=0.079$) however, it significantly affected the still birth ($\chi^2=28.134$, $p=0.002$). Agricultural workers and plant and machine operators were about 7 times and 17 times more likely to have still birth than the unemployed respectively. Also, agricultural worker has 8 times odds of having LBW babies when compared to the unemployed.

Conclusion: There were substantial differences in the risk of adverse pregnancy outcomes between the different occupational groups.

Keywords: Low birth weight, Maternal occupation, Pregnancy outcomes, Preterm delivery, Still birth

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